

OPEN LETTERS

Quercus chrysolepis Liebm. in Bouquet Cañon

I am taking the liberty of sending you herewith a couple of photographs taken recently of what I believe to be the largest Cañon Live Oak in California. This tree is located on the side of a mountain about one mile above Bouquet Cañon in the Santa Barbara National Forest. It measures over ten feet in diameter, eighty-five feet in height and has a spread of over one hundred and twenty-five feet.

In spite of its enormous size the tree is in excellent condition but lost a large limb last winter due to the unusually heavy snow-fall. The enormous size of this tree is probably accounted for by the fact that a large spring comes out of the ground right under the roots of the tree.—L. A. BARRETT, Assistant District Forester, U. S. Forest Service, San Francisco, July 1, 1922.

Cercis occidentalis Torr. (Red Bud)

This magnificent shrub I found growing along Putah Creek on the road from Winters to the Napa Mountains. These shrubs were dense, 4 to 12 feet high—each standing alone, a solid mass of bloom, a wonderful blaze of glory among the green willows and low trees of the creek banks. We saw several with the trunks covered with Dutchman's Pipe in full bloom. I am unable to classify it and so beg your assistance.—ROSE LINEBAUGH, April 14, 1922.

Both for its unusual season of bloom and the great abundance of red flowers produced on its winter branches before the leaves appear, *Cercis occidentalis* is a remarkable species among the native shrubs and deserves a place in gardens. It is common in the Sierra foothills and recurs in certain areas in the inner Coast Ranges, but its distribution is not as yet well worked out. Mr. Anson Blake tells me that it does not occur in Berryessa Valley, nor westward to Howell Mountain, nor in Napa Valley. My own field records give confirmation to this. It comes in, however, about Middleton, Lake County, and Mr. Blake has noted it again on Cold Creek on the road to Potter Valley, Mendocino County. It approaches the coast less nearly than certain other interior or arid region species which range westward and may prove a good index plant for certain combinations of the climatic factors.—W. L. JEPSON.

Skunk Cabbage (*Lysichiton Kamtschaticensis*) on the Mendocino Coast

The pods sent you were collected on September 9, a short distance from Mendocino City. They were growing in water but not in a running stream. The stalks are of very frail substance so that the stem soon wilts, letting the pods fall into the water. There they immediately disintegrate—I suppose from the effects of the water but the townspeople tell me also from the wood-rats. The pulpy substance enclosing the seeds swells, making a gelatine-like mass

resembling tapioca. This, I presume, is for the purpose of getting the seeds transported by the water without injury as they did not appear ripe. (However I am not sure that I would know a ripe seed if I were to see one). The plants grow in swampy areas and in the beginnings of small streams, the leaves attaining a much greater size than any that I was able to send. I think it would be safe to say that some are nearly three feet long.—MARY G. CLARK, San Francisco, Oct. 1, 1921.

HOOKER OAK

WALTER A. BUCKBEE

When bold Balboa, eagle eyed,
Stood on a peak in Darien,
And gazed upon that rolling tide,
Then I was old—old even then.

Wisdom the wind had whispered me,
And taught me of the restless things—
The bear with swaying head, the bee,
The pigeon with the whistling wings.

The cats come creeping from the rocks,
The lonely wolf to moon and mourn,
And black-tailed deer with muddy hocks,
To rub the velvet from the horn.

I hear a screaming in the dark;
The crackling and the thrash of brush,
And then a faint and far-off bark—
And then again—the forest hush.

Black in the moon the shadows wave,
I see them dancing two and two,
And which was shadow, which was brave,
Only I and the moon-man knew.

And now you come with giant plow
To spoil my poppy fields of gold.
When did you come and where and how?
I nodded a bit for I am old.

Etching the East like lines on lead,
Against the wind the wild geese climb,
As over the marsh and valley spread,
The cold grey fogs of winter time.

And now the big round sun appears;
The ants creep up my trunk again.
And so it was a thousand years
Before that day in Darien.